Preparation of foolproof electoral rolls

2041. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Election Commission has announced a slew of guidelines to ensure that no eligible citizen is denied the right to vote;

(b) if so, whether the Election Commission plans to use geographic information system in the Postal Department for this purpose; and

(c) if so, the details of the guidelines?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) and (c) The Election Commission has informed that in its endeavour to prepare an error-free electoral roll to ensure that no eligible citizens is denied the right to vote for want of registration in the electoral roll, the Commission issues detailed guidelines at the time of each revision, whether intensive or summary, to ensure that names of all eligible electors already included in the electoral roll are retained and those who become eligible for the first time or left out due to any other reasons are included in the roll. In addition, based on the experience in the recent general elections, the Commission has taken the following new initiatives aimed to involve greater participation of public in general and political parties in particular to ensure that all eligible citizens avail of the opportunity provided for inclusions, deletions and corrections in the electoral roll:-

(1) The electoral rolls are being disseminated at a wider scale. Copies of the relevant part of the draft rolls are provided to Resident Welfare Associations, Mohalla Sudhar Simities, JJ Sudhar Simities, Housing Societies, etc. in urban areas and to Gaon Sabhas/Ward Sabhas in rural areas.The rolls are read at specially convened meetings of these bodies so that it is possible for the residents of the area to take active part in cleaning the electoral roll by pointing out deletions, corrections and additions.

(2) NGOs are also being actively associated during the process of revision.

(3) The rolls are being kept at post offices where people can inspect them and file claims and objections.

(4) Facilities for e-registration through internet at metros and big cities are being provided. It has been experimented on a pilot basis in Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur during the current revision w.r.t. 1-1-2004 in Maharashtra. The same would be extended in other parts of the country during the next revision w.r.t. 1-1-2005 as the qualifying date.

(5) Ordinarily applications for inclusion, deletion etc.can be submitted individually. However the Commission has been allowing filing of applications in bulk by recognized political parties, Resident Welfare Associations, Executive Officer of Gaon Sabha to facilitate enrolment of agricultural labourers, farmers, weaker sections etc.who are by and large illiterate and cannot avail the opportunity otherwise.

(b) The Election Commission has informed that it may consider use of Geographical Information System for creation of polling station area maps in urban localities and otehr related issues.

Recording of evidence through video conferencing

2042. SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to record statements/evidence of under trials through video conferencing;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the extent to which it is likely to be helpful in speedy trials; and

(d) whether Government are considering use of video-corferencing in every court for speedy trial?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) As per information received, several States are considering video conferencing as a measure to facilitate trial.

(b) The Government of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat have enacted amendment to Section 167 (2) of the CrPC in its application to their respective States to avail video conferencing in lieu of production of the accused before the Magistrate.